

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 DHA-02 OMB-01 IO-13 /086 W
-----051553Z 068727 /42 15

O P 050900Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4216

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAHIGEN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0429

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 5)

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LY

SUBJ: LIBYAN ARMY EXECUTIONS

REF: TRIPOLI 396 (NOTAL)

1. QADHAFI'S REVOLUTION HAS TAKEN FURTHER TURN INTERNALLY
WITH REPORTED EXECUTION SOME 20 MILITARY OFFICERS OVER
WEEKEND, WITH PERHAPS MORE TO FOLLOW. THERE IS NO OFFICIAL
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CONFIRMATION OF THESE REPORTS, BUT WIDESPREAD STORIES OF
EXECUTIONS ARE SPREADING RAPIDLY ACCOMPAINED BY SHOCK AND
CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSION THAT QADHAFI'S RULE TAKING ON A
BLOODY, REPRESSIVE ASPECT. AS FAR AS WE AWARE,
QADHAFI HAS TREATED HIS OPPONENTS RATHER GENTLY
UNTIL NOW. OFFICERS SAID TO HAVE BEEN EXECUTED
WERE APPARENTLY CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH FORMER R.C.C.

MEMBER MUHAYSHI (NOW IN CAIRO EXILE) AND OTHER
DISSIDENT ARMED FORCES ELEMENTS TRIED BY MILITARY
TRIBUNAL AT FURNAJ BARRACKS NEAR TRIPOLI.

2. PROSECUTION AND PROBABLE EXECUTION ARMY
DISSIDENTS ALSO INDICATES THAT QADHAFI HAS TURNED
FROM MODERATE BETTER EDUCATED MEMBERS HIS ENTOURAGE
TO MORE AGGRESSIVE, XENOPHOBIC CIRCLE OF "TOUGHS"
SUCH AS HASSAN ASHKAL, KALIFAH HUNAYSH AND ABDULLAH
JIJAZI AS SOURCE COUNSEL AND SUPPORT. FORMER R.C.C.
MEMBERS KHAROUBI AND HUMAIDI ARE SAID TO HAVE
BITTERLY OPPOSED CARRYING OUT DEATH SENTENCES. OTHER
FREE OFFICER SUPPORTERS, WHO WERE RESENTFUL OVER
KHAROUBI'S POTENTIAL FOR CONTROL OF ARMED FORCES
AS CHIEF OF STAFF, URGED QADHAFI TO TREAT DISSIDENTS
SEVERELY. THESE OFFICERS SEEM TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN
ELIMINATING KHAROUBI FROM HIS POTENTIAL POWER
POSITION -- KHAROUBI IS NOW NEVER REFERRED TO AS
CHIEF OF STAFF AND HE HAS PROBABLY BEEN REMOVED FROM
THIS POSITION. QADHAFI IS NOT A CAPTIVE OF HIS
ADVISORS -- HE IS MUCH TOO STRONG-WILLED -- AND HE
CHOOSES HIS CIRCLE ON BASIS THEIR UNQUESTIONED
LOYALTY TO HIS RULE AND ABILITY CARRY OUT HIS
INSTRUCTIONS.

3. CRITICISM OF QADHAFI HAS BECOME MORE OPEN IN
RECENT WEEKS AND QADHAFI PROBABLY FEELS NEED TO
RESPOND WITH UNEQUIVOCAL ACTION TO DEMONSTRATE THAT
HE WILL TOLERATE ABSOLUTELY NO OPPOSITION TO HIS
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RULE. STORY HAS IT THAT EXECUTIONS WERE WITNESSED
BY UNIT COMMANDERS TO ENSURE THAT QADHAFI'S MESSAGE
IS DIRECTLY AND FORCEFULLY RELAYED TO RANKS.
CRITICISM AND DISSIDENCE IN MILITARY SEEMS TO HAVE
BEEN UNCOORDINATED AND DIFFUSED THUS FAR, BUT THERE
ARE NUMBER OF TALES THAT QADHAFI WAS OBJECT OF
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BY ARMY OPPONENTS IN DECEMBER
OR JANUARY. HE MUST ALSO FEEL PERSONALLY VULNERABLE
TO POTENTIAL FOR EGYPTIANS TO REMOVE HIM FROM SCENE,
EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH LIBYAN DISSIDENTS.

4. IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE IF QADHAFI'S REPORTED
RESORT TO VIOLENCE AT HOME IS SIGN OF STRENGTH,
WEAKNESS, OR LOSS OF TOUCH WITH REALITY. WE INCLINED
SUSPECT COMBINATION OF WEAKNESS/FEAR AND SENSE OF
HUBRIS DEVELOPED IN RECENT MONTHS, I.E. MOSCOW TRIP,
"PEOPLES' POWER" AND CASTRO VISIT. WHETHER QADHAFI'S
RULE WILL BE STRENGTHENED OR WEAKENED AS RESULT OF
HIS ACTIONS IS, OF COURSE, FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION,

ANSWER TO WHICH CERTAINLY NOT YET APPARENT.
NONETHELESS, SAFE TO SAY THAT WHITE (BLOODLESS) PHASE
OF SEPTEMBER REVOLUTION, ABOUT WHICH EVEN LESS
ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTERS BOASTED, SEEMS TO BE OVER.

5. SURVIVAL QADHAFI'S REGIME WILL ULTIMATELY DEPEND
ON ARMED FORCES. OPPOSITION AMONG BUSINESS AND OTHER
CIRCLES IS NOT NECESSARILY DIRECTLY RELEVANT.
QADHAFI DID NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH SIGNIFICANT
OPPOSITION FROM MILITARY FOR FIRST SIX YEARS OF HIS
RULE AND THUS HIS SKILL IN MANIPULATIVE POLITICS OF
MILITARY RULE HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN TESTED. MANY
IN ARMY WILL, OF COURSE, BE INTIMIDATED BY QADHAFI'S
HARSH REPRESSION. OTHERS WILL REACT BITTERLY AND
PERHAPS WITH CONCERN FOR THEIR OWN SURVIVAL. WE
EXPECT EGYPTIANS WILL BE AMONG THE FIRST WITH AN
ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE OF LIBYAN
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LEADERSHIP IN THESE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES.
CARLE

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